

U3A

Suggested Opening Comments

- During their recent meeting in Washington, President Bush and PM Thaksin agreed that our countries should hold a Strategic Dialogue.
- The purpose of the Dialogue has been to bring together Thai and American civilian and military officials to discuss collectively major issues of concern across a wide range of topics.
- The talks have been very successful, and explored bilateral and regional issues, deepening our relationship through a free-flowing discussion. Key areas of discussion included
  - How to work together in ASEAN and other fora
  - Promoting educational exchanges
  - Developments in the region
  - How to improve our military to military relationship
  - Non-proliferation of WMD
  - Counterterrorism

Provisional Talking Points:**Why Now**

Q. Were the talks stopped, as is commonly assumed, because the U.S. response to the Asian Financial Crisis soured the relationship?

- I understand that we had planned to hold a Dialogue about eight years ago, but scheduling problems intervened.
- In the intervening years we have maintained regular rounds of visits by senior leaders from both countries.

Q. Why have you restarted the Dialogue after a nine year hiatus?

- Experts in both countries felt we should renew the Dialogue as a way to bring experts together informally to explore ways to enhance the relationship.

**U.S. Prisons/Bases in Thailand**

Q. Can you respond to the Dana Priest story in the Washington Post suggesting there was a "black" CIA interrogation site in Thailand that was closed in 2003?

- We have nothing to add to the Department Spokesman's previous comments on this subject.

Q. Is/was the VOA transmission facility at Udorn the site of a "black" CIA interrogation site as reported in some Thai media?

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- That is ridiculous.
- The VOA facility at Udorn is a radio transmission facility established and operated in full cooperation with the Thai government.
- The VOA transmission facility has hosted numerous tours for Thai officials and interested groups, including a large group of Thai students as recently as August. Tours of the facility are part of the facility's outreach to the local community with which it is closely engaged. The new Provincial Governor toured the VOA facility this morning (November 8) and was just the latest visitor to confirm the VOA site is only a radio transmission facility only.

Q. Did you discuss setting up U.S. bases in Thailand?

- The United States has no bases in Thailand and has no intention of asking for bases in Thailand.
- We have shared interests in a number of key areas, including countering terrorism, and we have a robust joint/combined exercise program.
- As we witnessed during the response to the Tsunami, our military relationship provides valuable benefits to both of our countries and to the region.

### **Southern Situation**

Q. Is the U.S. concerned about the situation in the South?

- The United States remains concerned about the continuing unrest in southern Thailand. We look to the Thai government to resolve the situation in order to prevent further violence and address differences peacefully.
- We do not have any definitive evidence on who is responsible for the violence or where they may have received training.

Q. Will the U.S. offer assistance to Thailand to address problems in far southern Thailand?

- We understand that the violence in the South is a domestic issue that the Thai government is working to resolve.
- We have no plans to send U.S. troops in the South.

Q. Did you discuss allegations of Thai human rights violations in the South?

- We always urge security forces to conform with international human rights norms while conducting operations.

### **China**

Q. Did you discuss China?

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